



02/07/2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Eliza Gonzalez

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime,

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Eliza Gonzalez, I live in Salem, OR, and I am currently a student at Willamette University. Today I am writing on behalf of myself and with the support of PCUN.

I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

Farmworkers are essential. They have continued to work tirelessly through a pandemic and multiple harvests in order to provide food and resources for Oregon residents. During harvest times farmworkers often work much more than 40 hours, usually averaging 50 hours in a workweek. For this reason, overworking is already a reality for farmworkers, and Overtime Pay Law was created to discourage employers from overworking employees, a luxury farmworkers are not afforded. Farmworkers are exposed to heat for long periods of time, sometimes leading to illness or death from heat exhaustion, and yet are still expected to work at more than full capacity. The annual income for labor workers in Oregon is on average \$28,540, which is not nearly enough to support a family and often means living with food insecurity and financial stress. This low income is not due to lack of effort or individual faults, but rather failures of the system in which we live. It is crucial, and frankly, the bare minimum that people are compensated for their labor, doing any different would be demeaning and disgraceful. Farmworkers deserve dignity, respect, and labor rights. They have been excluded from the minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay since the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which is far too long. Farmworkers are not second-class humans and deserve to be treated humanely and with the appreciation and compensation they deserve.

It is imperative that you vote in support of Farmworker Overtime or express neutrality so that this issue can be further discussed and worked to be solved.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Sincerely,  
Eliza Gonzalez